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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [IZ](#)
SUBJECT: AL-FADHILA AND THE REGIONS LAW: STAY TUNED.

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Classified By: Political Counselor Matt Tueller for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (C) Summary: On Tuesday, March 11, Poloff met with Dr. Basim al-Hechaimi, a member of the Council of Representatives (COR) from the al-Fadhila bloc. During this informal and cordial meeting, Dr. Basim opined on several topics, including Vice-President Adil Abd al-Mehdi's recent veto of the Provincial Powers Law, which he believes will not be reversed. He also weighed in on the performance of the Maliki government, labeling it corrupt and incompetent. Commenting on the current security situation in Basrah, he indicated that it could only be resolved politically. Addressing the issue of the Regions Law, Dr. Basim's comments indicated that al-Fadhila has given the idea of federal status for Basrah serious thought. End Summary.

12. (C) At a meeting held at the al-Rasheed Hotel in the Green Zone, Poloff met with Dr. Basim al-Hechaimi, a COR representative from the al-Fadhila bloc. Following up on a previous conversation held with embassy officials at the al-Fadhila bloc headquarters (see reftel), Dr. Basim again expressed his doubts that Vice-President Abd al-Mehdi would reverse his veto on the Provincial Powers Law. Asked whether Abd al-Mehdi's objections were legally valid, he maintained that ISCI wants to delay provincial elections, and that Abd al-Mehdi's veto was a stalling tactic.

3.(C) Dr. Basim also weighed in on the performance of the Maliki government, labeling it corrupt and incompetent. Commenting on the current situation in Iraq, Dr. Basim appeared to grudgingly admit that the situation was somewhat better, which he attributed to the surge in U.S. forces, the Sahwa councils, and the Jaysh al-Mahdi (JAM) cease-fire. Yet in the same breath, he added that the security situation in Iraq was still very unstable, and that the Maliki government had failed to take advantage of the lull in violence. In his estimation, only the U.S. could prod the current government to action; absent this pressure, it would do nothing to improve the lives of Iraqis.

4.(C) Turning the conversation to Basrah, Dr. Basim mentioned that there is a lot of speculation that the GOI intends to send troops to the southern city to restore order. Positing that the crisis in Basrah can only be resolved by political means, not by military force, Dr. Basim added that the central government is trying to marginalize the current governor, Mohammed al-Waeli. In his opinion, al-Waeli's relationship with the security forces is very poor, and most of the security decisions come from the central government without al-Waeli's input or consent.

5.(C) In a rather candid discussion of the Regions Law, Dr. Basim stated that al-Fadhila desires a united Iraq, not a country broken down into cantons. According to him, the

ideal situation would be an Iraq with a strong central government balanced by strong provincial governments. That said, he added that if this were not possible, al-Fadhila and the Sadr Trend would not be opposed to a Basrah region, which could also include Maysan and Dhi Qar, though al-Fadhila prefers Basrah by itself. Dr. Basim also noted that support for federalism is much stronger in Basrah than in other southern states. In addition, he commented that the Regions Law is something that every party is talking about, though not openly.

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